

II. REMARKS:

Claims 1-9 were pending in this application and were rejected. The present amendment amends claims 1 and 9 to more particularly point out and clarify Applicant's invention. No new matter has been added by the present amendment. After this amendment, claims 1-9 will be pending.

Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 112:

Claims 1-9 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, first and/or second paragraph, as being based on a non-enabling disclosure, or as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regards as the invention.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the heat pipe is thermally isolated from any external cooling arrangement that includes a heat exchanger. Support for this amendment may be found in Applicants' application at paragraph [0026]. This amendment was in response to an objection that "thermally isolated from any external cooling arrangement" is inconsistent with the disclosed invention because "ambient air surrounding the steering wheel, for example, constitutes an external cooling arrangement". Accordingly, Applicants believe that the amendment in claim 1 has cured the 35 USC § 112, first and/or second paragraph, rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-9.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 102:

Claims 1-3 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b), as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 1,388,488 issued to Senn ("Senn"). In view of the amendments and remarks contained herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 1-3 and 7-9 are traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the heat pipe is configured to transfer heat from a first region of the rim to another region of the rim solely under function of the heat pipe. The heat pipe comprises an elongated metal tube containing an elongated wick extending from one end of the metal tube to the other end of the metal tube. The metal tube contains a volatile liquid and both the one end and the other end of the metal tube are sealed. Support for this amendment may be found in Applicants' application at paragraphs [0021]-[0026].

Senn discloses a steering wheel with a rim that is heated so as to assist the driver in keeping his hands warm. The rim is formed from a hollow tube *c* that is bent into a circular shape. The opposing ends of the tube *c* are connected by a member *d*, which is provided with a neck and an opening. The opening is closed with a plug *g*, which carries an electric heating element *h*. A small portion of heating liquid *i* is placed within the hollow tube *c* of the rim where the heating element *h* extends into the liquid *i*, thereby vaporizing the liquid *i* as steam to fill the remainder of the hollow tube *c* to heat the entire periphery of the steering wheel. When the steering wheel is turned, the heating liquid *i* will remain in the lower part of the steering wheel and will directly communicate heat by conduction at all points extending around the steering wheel. *Senn* at lines 30-107. Notably, the tube *c* is completely hollow at all points extending

around the steering wheel and there is no disclosure that the hollow tube *c* contains anything other than the heating liquid *i* and the resulting steam.

This is unlike Applicants invention where the metal tube of the heat pipe contains an elongated wick extending from one end of the metal tube to the other end of the metal tube. In that Senn lacks the noted elements of claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections based thereon should be withdrawn. Accordingly, Applicants believe that claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-3 and 7-9 are in a condition for allowance.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 103:

Claims 4-6 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a), as being anticipated by Senn in view of U.S. Pat No. 5,850,741 issued to Feher ("Feher"). In view of the amendments and remarks contained herein, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of claims 4-6 are traversed.

Since claims 4-6 depend from claim 1 and since Feher fails to disclose a metal tube of a heat pipe containing an elongated wick that extends from one end of the metal tube to the other end of the metal tube, the combination of Senn and Feher cannot render the claims of the present invention as obvious. The rejection under 35 USC § 103(a) is therefore improper and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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